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Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 190938

61
ORIGIN EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-11 SS-15 SSO-00 CCO-00 L-03 INR-10

RSC-01 /066 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/RPE - JRTARRANT
APPROVED BY EB - JKATZ
EUR/RPE - AKATZ
EB/ORF/FSE - JBENNSKY(DRAFT)
EUR/WE - RMANGER (SUBS)
S/S
E - JBILLER
---------- 060969
R 252224Z SEP 73
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
USMISSION OECD PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 190938

STADIS//////////////////////////
TOECO 46

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG, OECD
REF: (A) THE HAGUE 4161 (B) NAIROBI 6455 (NOTAL)
SUBJ: OECD WORKING GROUP ON OIL SHARING

1. VAN RHIJN MISCONCEIVES HIS MANDATE AS CHAIRMAN OF WORK-
ING GROUP ON OIL SHARING. AT JUNE 12 MEETING OF OIL COMMIT-
TEE HLG, UNDER SECRETARY CASEY PROPOSED THAT AN INFORMAL
GROUP BE ESTABLISHED TO DEVELOP AND EVALUATE THE VARIOUS
OIL SHARING OPTIONS OPEN TO OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES. AT BOTH
AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER MEETINGS OF OIL SHARING WORKING PARTY
VAN RHIJN, WITH SUPPORT FROM MOST OTHER WORKING PARTY MEM-
BERS, HAS SOUGHT TO EXTEND THE GROUP'S MANDATE BY ATTEMPT-
ING TO NEGOTIATE AGREEMENT ON A SINGLE COMPROMISE SCHEME
THAT WOULD BE RECOMMENDED TO THE HLG . US
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PAGE 02 STATE 190938

REPRESENTATIVES TO WORKING GROUP HAVE MAINTAINED POSITION

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

THAT GROUP'S TASK WOULD BE FULFILLED WHEN ISSUES SHARPENED
AND CLEARLY DELINEATED OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS ARE PREPARED
FOR CONSIDERATION BY HLG . THERE WAS NO
US INTENT TO REACH AGREEMENT AT WORKING PARTY LEVEL ON
BASIS FOR APPORTIONING OIL IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY.

2. UNDER SECRETARY CASEY AND MR. FLANIGAN MADE OUR POSITION
CLEAR TO JAPANESE OFFICIALS IN TOKYO DURING RECENT GATT
MINISTERIAL MEETING: WORKING GROUP IS TO PRESENT OPTIONS
ON SHARING ARRANGEMENTS AND POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
3. NO REPEAT NO ASSURANCES TO VAN RHIJN ALONG LINES SUG-
GESTED REFTEL (A) ARE REQUIRED. DEPARTMENT SEES NO REASON
FOR US OFFICIALS TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES FURTHER ON SUBSTAN-
TIVE ISSUES OF OIL SHARING CRITERIA UNTIL WORKING GROUP
HAS COMPLETED DELINEATION OF ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF ACTION.

4. EMBASSY SHOULD INFORM VAN RHIJN:
(A) HIS CONCEPTION THAT THE GROUP'S TASK IS TO NEGOTIATE
A SINGLE AGREED RECOMMENDATION ON OIL SHARING TO PUT BE-
FORE THE HLG IS CONTRARY TO UNDERSTANDING
IN HLG ON BASIS OF WHICH GROUP IS ESTABLISHED.
(B) THE US CONSIDERS THAT WORKING GROUP SHOULD LIMIT IT-
SELF AT THIS TIME TO ANALYZING AND CLARIFYING THE
ISSUES INVOLVED AND THEN TO PREPARE OPTIONS FOR INITIAL
CONSIDERATION BY THE HLG.
(C) POSITIONS TAKEN BY US AT WORKING PARTY ARE IN NO WAY
INDICATIVE OF ANY LESSENING INTEREST IN REACHING A SOLUTION
TO THIS PROBLEM OR OF US INABILITY TO MOVE TOWARD AN AGREE-
MENT. OUR POSITIONS REFLECT THE CONSISTENT VIEW THAT RE-
SOLUTION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE OF OIL SHARING CRITERIA
MUST BE DONE AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL. THIS MEANS THE HLG
OR OTHER APPROPRIATE SENIOR BODIES.
(D) CONTINUED PRESSURE BY VAN RHIJN TO FORCE AGREEMENT ON
A SINGLE OPTION IN THE WORKING GROUP CONTEXT IS NOT
CONDUCIVE TO REACHING AN ULTIMATE SOLUTION.

5. FYI. UNDER SECRETARY CASEY HAS DISCUSSED MATTER
RAISED IN REFTEL (A) WITH VAN LENNEP IN NAIROBI. VAN
LENNEP UNDERSTANDS AND AGREES WITH US POSITION THAT WORKING
GROUP ROLE IS LIMITED TO DEFINING OPTIONS. HE UNDERTOOK
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PAGE 03 STATE 190938

TO CLARIFY OUR POSITION TO VAN RHIJN. END FYI. RUSH

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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE190938
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JRTARRANT
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS RUSH
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730911/aaaaahuj.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: (A) THE HAGUE 4161 (B) NAIROBI 6455, (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19-Sep-2001 by freemaal>; APPROVED <05-Nov-2001 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OECD WORKING GROUP ON OIL SHARING
TAGS: ENRG, OECD
To: THE HAGUE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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